



**Testimony Before the  
Appropriations and Human Services  
Committees**

**Renewal of the Medicaid Home and Community  
Based Personal Care Assistance (PCA) Waiver**

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Good afternoon, Senators Harp and Doyle, Representatives Geragosian and Walker, and members of the Appropriations and Human Services Committees. My name is Claudette Beaulieu and I am the deputy commissioner at the Department of Social Services. I am here today on behalf of Commissioner Michael Starkowski to seek your approval of the Governor's proposal to renew and amend the Personal Care Assistance (PCA) Waiver.

In 1995, legislation was passed to allow the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services to seek approval from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services to administer the Personal Care Assistance Waiver (CGS Section 17b-605a). The department successfully submitted an application to CMS to serve 409 individuals. Connecticut's PCA Waiver Program has been providing supports to maintain adults with chronic, severe, and permanent disabilities, in the community since January 1997. Without these services, these individuals would require institutionalization.

The current waiver period ends 9/30/09 and the department anticipates submitting the renewal waiver application by July 1, 2009, to CMS for the period of 10/01/09 through 09/30/14. We are seeking approval at this time because CMS requires that we submit an application for their review 90 days prior to the start date.

As you know, Medicaid waivers must be submitted to the Connecticut Legislature's committees of cognizance for review and approval per CGS Section 17b-8, and funding for the services must be appropriated as part of the final budget passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor. We are grateful for the support of both Governor Rell and the General Assembly for this important program, which is but one of several state programs that allow disabled and/or elderly individuals to live in the community, in the least restrictive setting possible, with the provision of supportive services.

The department has sought and obtained this approval on the following occasions:

Year	Participant Enrollment
1996	409 (original submission)
2000	498 (renewal)
2004	698 (renewal)
2007	748 (amendment)

This waiver renewal before you today would add an additional 141 slots over the course of the next three years. These slots are specifically targeted for participants in the Money Follows the Person program in addition to the 748 slots we currently have. We anticipate an overall funding level of \$139.3 million over the life of the waiver to support those individuals in the community.

I'd like to take this opportunity to provide you with an overview of the program and its current status.

## **PROGRAM STATUS**

At this time, we are serving 748 individuals on the waiver. The program reached capacity on February 2, 2007 and has a current waitlist of 44 participants.

Program costs are contingent upon the number of activities of daily living (ADLs) with which the waiver participant requires assistance. These are defined as eating, bathing, dressing, transferring, and toileting. Monthly cost caps range from a low of \$3,414 for persons needing assistance with 2 ADLs to a high of \$5,690 for 5 ADLs. The average actual cost per participant is \$2,400 per month. The state assures that for any year that the waiver is in effect, the average per capita expenditures under the waiver will not exceed 100 percent of the average per capita expenditures that would have been made under the Medicaid state plan for nursing homes.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:**

To be eligible for the PCA waiver, a person must

- Be a Connecticut resident age 18 and older with a severe physical disability requiring a nursing facility level of care. The disability must result in substantial functional limitations in a minimum of two ADLs;
- have income that does not exceed \$2,022 per month; and
- have assets, which include bank accounts, some life insurance policies, savings bonds and stocks, that do not exceed \$1,600.

## **Application Process**

People living in the community or residing in a nursing home or other facility can apply for the PCA waiver to DSS, where we check to determine whether an applicant is on, or would potentially qualify for, Medicaid. This brief process allows the department to screen out individuals who are grossly over income or assets for the PCA waiver.

Once the applicant is deemed financially appropriate to proceed with application, a DSS social worker will perform an assessment to determine if the applicant meets the criteria for needing assistance with at least two and up to five activities of daily living.

During this process, the social worker also assesses whether the applicant is capable of self-direction and able to hire, terminate, train, manage and supervise a PCA or has a conservator/representative able and available to perform these tasks.

Applicants may complete this process and concurrently apply for Medicaid, if they are not already receiving on Medicaid. If deemed eligible based on physical needs and Medicaid eligibility, the DSS Social Worker, in consultation with the consumer and his/her representative, develops a plan of care. This plan is based on the consumer's physical limitations and meets their needs within the cost cap, congruent with the number of ADLs requiring hands on assistance.

Once the care plan is approved, the PCA waiver participant can then move forward with hiring PCAs to provide the daily, hands-on care. The department has a contract with a fiscal intermediary, Allied Community Resources, which maintains a PCA registry and provides other administrative support to the PCA employers.

In addition to this process, participants on Money Follows the Person (MFP), who are currently living in a nursing home and have been assessed by DSS staff to meet the MFP criteria for the potential to return to the community, will be served in the community for the first year through MFP. Once their MFP eligibility is ended, those participants will transition to the PCA Waiver.

### **CURRENT SERVICES**

Currently, the PCA Waiver program provides two waiver services, Personal Care and Personal Emergency Response Systems. These services are defined as follows:

**Personal Care** consists of assistance with eating, bathing, dressing, personal hygiene and other activities of daily living, performed by a qualified person in the consumer's home or community.

**Personal Emergency Response Systems** are electronic devices that enable certain consumers at high risk of institutionalization to secure help in an emergency; the system may include a portable "help" button to allow for mobility. The system is connected to the person's telephone and programmed to signal a response center once the "help" button is activated.

### **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

The department seeks to make two changes to the program to support participants.

#### **Added Slots**

The first is to increase and reserve the number of slots available by 141 over the next three years to accommodate consumers transitioning from the legislatively approved Money Follows the Person (MFP) program to the PCA Waiver.

Participation in MFP lasts for one year after discharge from a nursing home. MFP participants must then be supported in Connecticut's existing community based service system, including the PCA waiver and our other Medicaid waivers. This capacity was assured to CMS with the submission of Connecticut's MFP Demonstration Operational Protocol. Without these added slots there will be no ability to transition persons from nursing homes to MFP to the PCA Waiver. These 141 new slots for MFP participants will mean an increase of \$14.3 million in the cost of the PCA Waiver over the five year period.

**Added Service**

The second is to make Assistive Technology (A.T.) available to waiver participants. A.T. is defined as an item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of participants to perform ADLs, or Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL). These include, but are not limited to: cooking, medication taking, cleaning, bill payment and shopping.

Examples include medication reminders that allow participants independence in taking their medication; personal computers allow clients to shop and pay their own bills without assistance; and specialized devices that allow individuals to perform grooming and hygiene activities independently.

The addition of the A.T. will maintain continuity with MFP, which includes this as a service, and provides added value to active participants.

I urge your support and approval of this renewal. I am here with my staff and would be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding the application. Thank you for the opportunity to provide an overview of the PCA Waiver.

